Dodd Gets Unusual Probe Privileges

By Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson

For the first time since the late Sen. Joe McCarthy was censured 12 years ago, the Senate begins closed-door hearings today on the conduct of one of its members.

The investigation begins in an atmosphere of public distrust of all members of Congress, which is unfortunate and unwarranted but is due in part to the alibis spread by Sen. Tom Dodd (D-Conn.) and his staff that what Dodd did was no different from what other Senators are doing. They impute to other Senators the pocketing of campaign funds, making speeches for a foreign agent, and helping manufacturers get Government contracts in return for monetary reward.

In our opinion, and we have covered the Senate for many years, this is not true. With two or three possible exceptions, Senators are honest.

Where Fault Lies

Their fault lies in the self-protection code of the Senate Club: "Thou shalt not criticize a member of the club."

Scores of Senators live on their Government salaries. We have been in their homes, seen Mrs. Gaylord Nelson, wife of the Senator from Wisconsin, do her own cooking; have seen Mrs. George McGovern, wife of the Senator from South Dakota, with her children wash the dishes.

Sen. Paul Douglas of Illinois made a total of $4458 last year in book royalties and lecture fees. This was his sole outside income. Douglas's bank account on May 5 was $2912, his wife's $1950.

In contrast, Sen. Dodd deposited in his personal bank account $55,000 from a testimonial dinner in 1961 alone. And his aides explained that he needed this to supplement his income, which that year was over $88,000.

However, the public does not believe Senators are honest, partly because the good Senators have shunned any fixing of ethical standards for their body, have lived by the code: "Protect one; smear all."

Club Code Prevails

As the Senate ethics hearings open today there is further evidence that the club code prevails. Unusual steps have been taken to protect the one Senator now under fire. He has been given the right to cross-examine witnesses, a privilege granted to no other person ever before investigated. He has been informed in advance regarding the details of the evidence against him, and given plenty of time to prepare answers.

Gen. Julius Klein, whose relations with Sen. Dodd will be the main object of the investigation, has left for West Germany and is not scheduled to return until mid-July. Dodd's friends advised that he is a poor witness and that it was better not to have him around to testify.

Klein will be represented by a brother of an important Senator, attorney Ben Javits, and it is reported Ben Javits will have the right to attend the closed-door hearing and ask questions.

Harried and Unhappy?

Makeup of the Ethics Committee which will sit in judgment on its fellow Senator is not particularly reassuring as far as the public is concerned. It is more reassuring to Sen. Dodd. Individually, members of the committee are fine men; but harassed, harried and unhappy. Its staff, however, is uncompromising in its diligence.

Chairman John Stennis, (D-Miss.), well known for his judicial fairness on the bench before he came to the Senate, has kept Dodd informed of what is happening inside the committee.

Sen. Mike Monroney (D-Okla.) was co-author of the La Follette-Monroney bill streamlining Congress, and was elected to the Senate by campaigning on the conflict of interest of the late Sen. Elmer Thomas, who had speculated on the commodity market while making Senate speeches aimed at influencing the price of commodities.

In the Senate, Monroney has been loath to investigate other Senators. When appointed to the Rules Subcommittee charged with investigating Joe McCarthy, he abruptly withdrew. Today he seems nervous over the $40,000 which his late colleague, Sen. Bob Kerr, sent to Oklahoma to finance Monroney's reelection campaign in 1962. This money came via Bobby Baker and West Coast savings and loan executive in compensation for changing the Senate Finance Committee's proposed taxes on savings and loan institutions.

Mike had nothing to do with the deal. But he's nervous.

Others on Committee

Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.) is a fine Senator, but has gone on record publicly that the Senate committee lacks power to check on Dodd's handling of political contributions. It's possible that McCarthy is nervous over the testimonial dinner arranged for him by the Butler Bros., contractors in St. Paul.

Sen. James Pearson, (R-Kans.) has said privately he is not in favor of sitting in judgment on his fellow Senator, which caused something of a furor in Kansas and brought a hot letter from another Kansas Republican. Rep. Robert Ellsworth.

Strongest members of the Ethics Committee are probably two Republicans, rugged Sen. John Sherman Cooper (Ky.) and benign Sen. Wallace Bennett (Utah), a staunch Mormon moralist.

© 1966, Bell-McClure Syndicate, Inc.